

BALTIMORE METROCENTER SURVEY

SURVEY NO.: B-2229

AREA: Cathedral Hill

MAGI NO.: 0422295811

Address: 323 North Charles Street

Current Name: Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Co. Bldg.

Block: 603 Lot: 15-16 Lot size: 169 ft. x 174 ft.
Height: 11 Materials: Granite and glass
Condition: Good Owner: A T & T Communications of Md.
Use: Commercial Accessible: Yes, restricted
Designation: Liber/Folio: SEB 166/1



Historic Name:

Date: 1970-71

Architect/Builder: James R. Edmunds, Jr.

Style (if appropriate): Modern

Description:

The Charles Street facade is five bays wide and is defined by six massive black granite-sheathed piers which rise from the ground to a level above the roofline. A plate glass curtain wall is recessed behind the piers to provide a colonnade at the street level. Rectangular concrete case planters are placed at the base of each pier. The entrance is in the second bay from the left or north end of the Charles Street elevation. At the second level the bays are filled with one story level of black granite panels. Above this, the bays are filled with black one-way glass between the piers through to the 10th story. The top is vertically corrugated black aluminum siding. The Pleasant Street elevation is windowless, with black granite end piers and base framing a central floating panel of gray granite outlined in black aluminum. A garage entrance at the rear of the lot opens into Lovegrove Alley.

Significance:

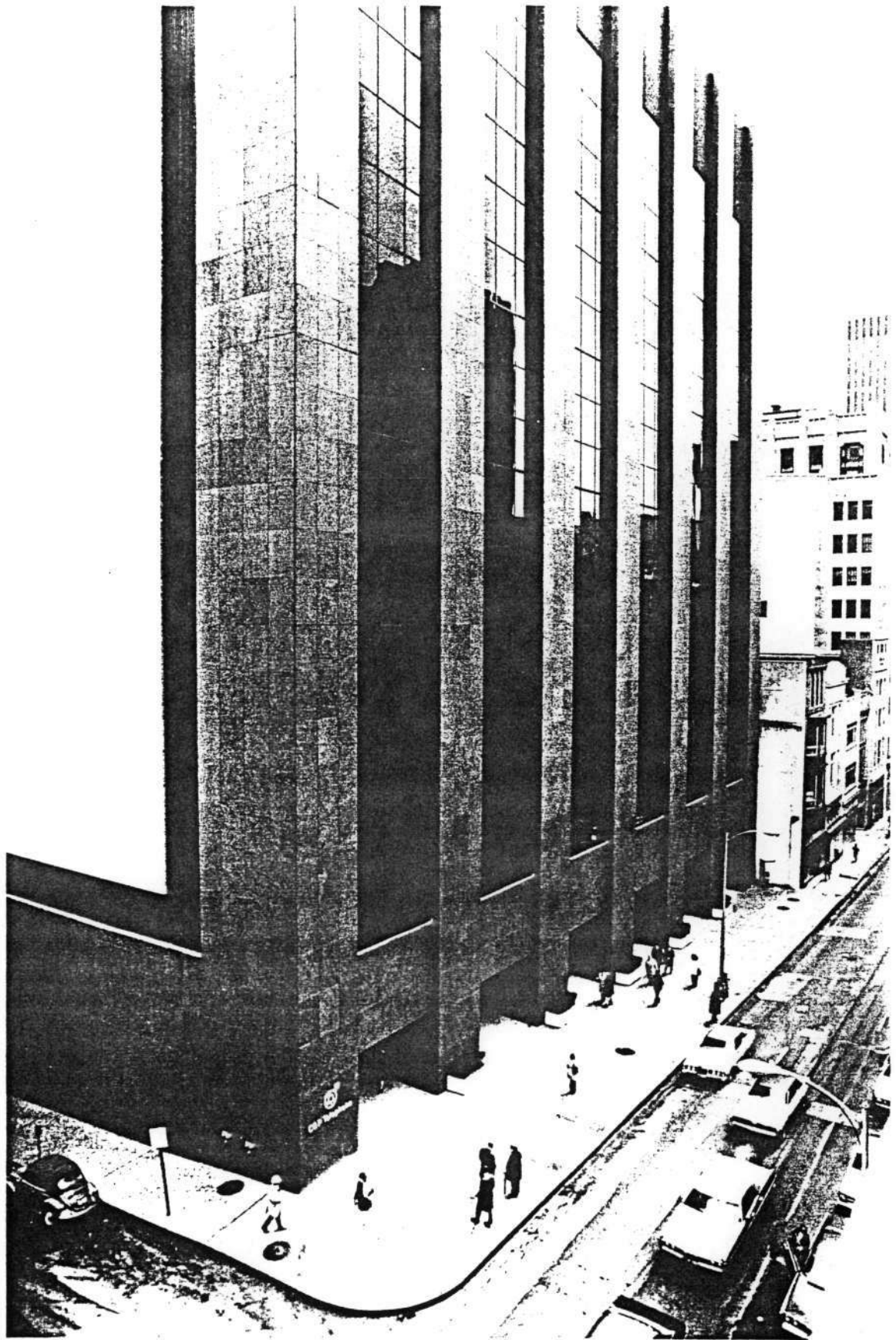
Area: architecture

Level: local

The C & P Charles Street building is an intrusion in the Charles Streetscape and, consequently, in the Cathedral Hill area. The massiveness, unrelieved linear geometry, and forbidding blackness of the building are in sharp contrast with the lighter colored, late 19th and early 20th century commercial facades to the south, west, and north. It is particularly incongruous with the Woman's Industrial Exchange, a National Register landmark late 19th century structure across Pleasant Street to the north. Abutted on the east by the Telephone Building, another significant building in the Cathedral Hill area, its aspect from that side is lessened because of the high-rise character of the 1940 structure. The setback of 10 feet on the Charles Street elevation was undoubtedly meant to mitigate the impact of the Modern style building on the streetscape, but this, in fact, emphasizes the change by leaving a void on one side of the closely built, single plane facade lines of the 300 block of Charles Street. Originally planned to carry a possible 30 stories, this building is already the only major intrusion in the Cathedral Hill district. In this surveyor's opinion, further height would only worsen the impact.

Sources: C & P Company files

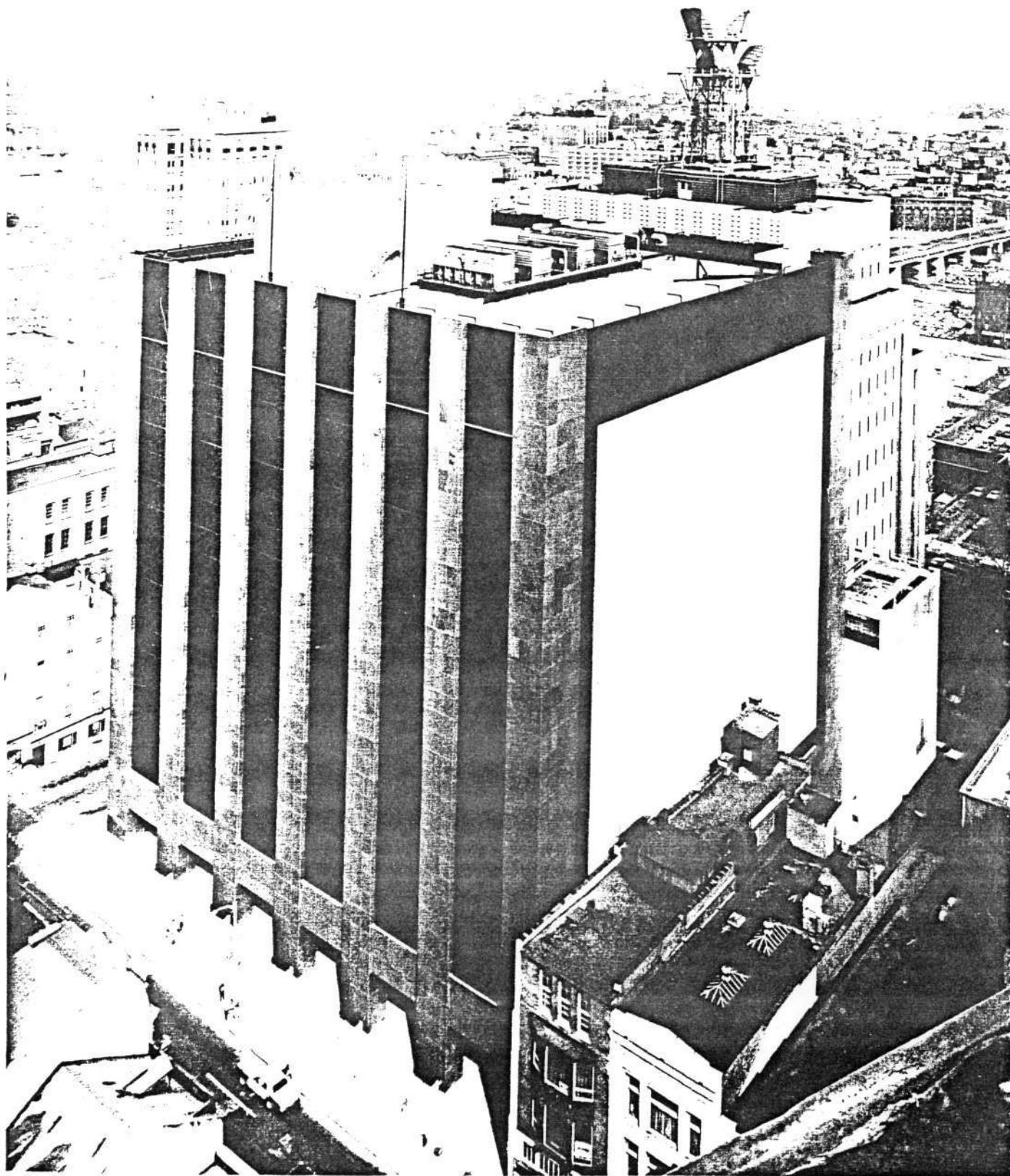
Surveyor and Date: Janet L. Davis, March 1985



C&P Bldg. B-2229
Publicity photo, ca. 1971

4 2 4 - 2 2

Credit:
TADDER / Baltimore
501 St. Paul Place
(301) 837-7427



C&P Bldg. B-2229
Publicity photo, ca. 1971

9 2 6 2 - 1

Credit:
TADDER / Baltimore
501 St. Paul Place
(301) 817-7427



Architect's rendering of C&P Bldg. enlarged to potential 30 stories
C&P Bldg. B-2229 Original at C&P Hqs.

Long Distance Planning

The new C & P Telephone Company of Maryland building at 323 N. Charles Street fulfills far more than the ordinary requirements of a major downtown building. Its primary function is to provide a needed extension to the company's 320 St. Paul Street telecommunications facility, which houses equipment to switch and terminate all long distance calls into and out of Maryland, as well as to route much intrastate traffic.

As such, it was necessary that the building provide a virtually impregnable, self-operating high-rise warehouse-type space to contain more central office equipment than any other C & P building ever constructed. The original 11 stories required a foundation and structural framing strong enough for the later possible addition of 19 more stories.

This called for three sub-basements, which in turn entailed 48-foot below grade excavations on busy Charles Street, with extensive underpinnings to adjacent property to preserve a more than century-old building, as well as unusually elaborate sheeting and shoring to protect Charles and Pleasant Streets.

And finally, the building sought not only to solve these problems, but to create an attractive Northern extension of Charles Center, Baltimore's giant downtown renewal project.

Therefore, the building should not only be aesthetically appealing outside, but afford pleasant working conditions for the 400 to 500 people employed there as well as offer attractive surroundings for

the visitor to the public business office and the more than 1,000 persons a month who are attracted to the Personnel Office, both on the lobby floor.

Thanks to years of careful planning, the building successfully fulfills all requirements, aesthetic as well as functional.

Unquestionably one of the strongest buildings in downtown Baltimore, 323 N. Charles complies with Civil Defense requirements to withstand natural disaster, civil disturbance and/or radioactive fallout in the event of atomic attack. To achieve this, the roof and walls—without windows—have a density of 150 lbs. per cubic foot.

To avoid a windowless concrete monolith rising in the heart of the downtown area, the front of the building is faced with glass and the column enclosures with Canadian granite. The North and South elevations are faced with large slabs of Cold Spring Granite from Minnesota. Placing these huge blocks—16' x 6' in size and weighing more than three tons per unit—posed one of the many construction problems facing the engineers involved.

A principal concern was how to handle such oversize building parts and the enormously heavy telephone equipment that was to go into the building without disrupting traffic on busy Charles Street any more than was absolutely necessary. Adding to the problem was where to store construction equipment needed at the site. The latter question was solved in an unusual way by utilizing the area atop the overhead pedestrian protection structure for storage of trailers, 40-ft. tractors, workmen's sheds and miscellaneous materials.

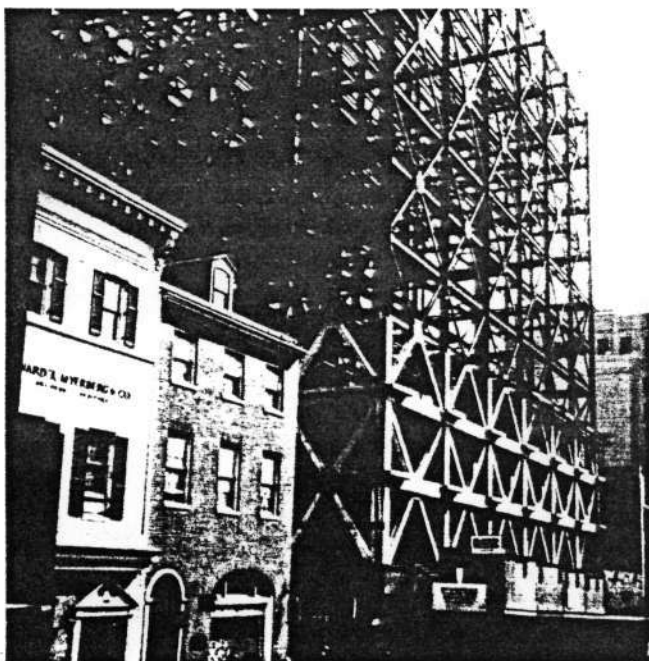
To provide an idea of the strength of the building, over 6100 tons of structural steel were used in the framework. Much of this went into the extensive wind-bracing, most of which was encased in concrete.

Additional concrete was employed in the third basement to encase and protect 13 oil storage tanks filled with fuel for the Emergency Turbine Generators in the 11th floor Power Room. These tanks are part of the fuel and power reservoir designed to enable the building to operate for up to 14 days without electricity or any other form of power from outside sources.

One highly pragmatic public service feature of 323 N. Charles is an off-street loading dock for all deliveries of mail, supplies, etc. This loading dock spans part of Lovegrove Alley, running between the original C & P building at 320 St. Paul and the new building. While still used as a public street during daily working hours, the alley is closed to the public in the evenings and weekends for C & P deliveries. As additional heavy equipment is brought for installation in the new building, it can be handled without interruption to traffic or danger to pedestrians.

To provide an idea of the need for this latest C & P building, the company now carries over nine million telephone conversations in Maryland every day. This compares with only about two million twenty years ago.

Next time you pick up your telephone to make a long distance call to or from Maryland, picture the handsome new structure at 323 N. Charles Street—and be confident that neither rain nor sleet nor hail nor wind nor even atomic attack is likely to stay your conversation from its completion.



From C&P PR Brochure, ca. 1970

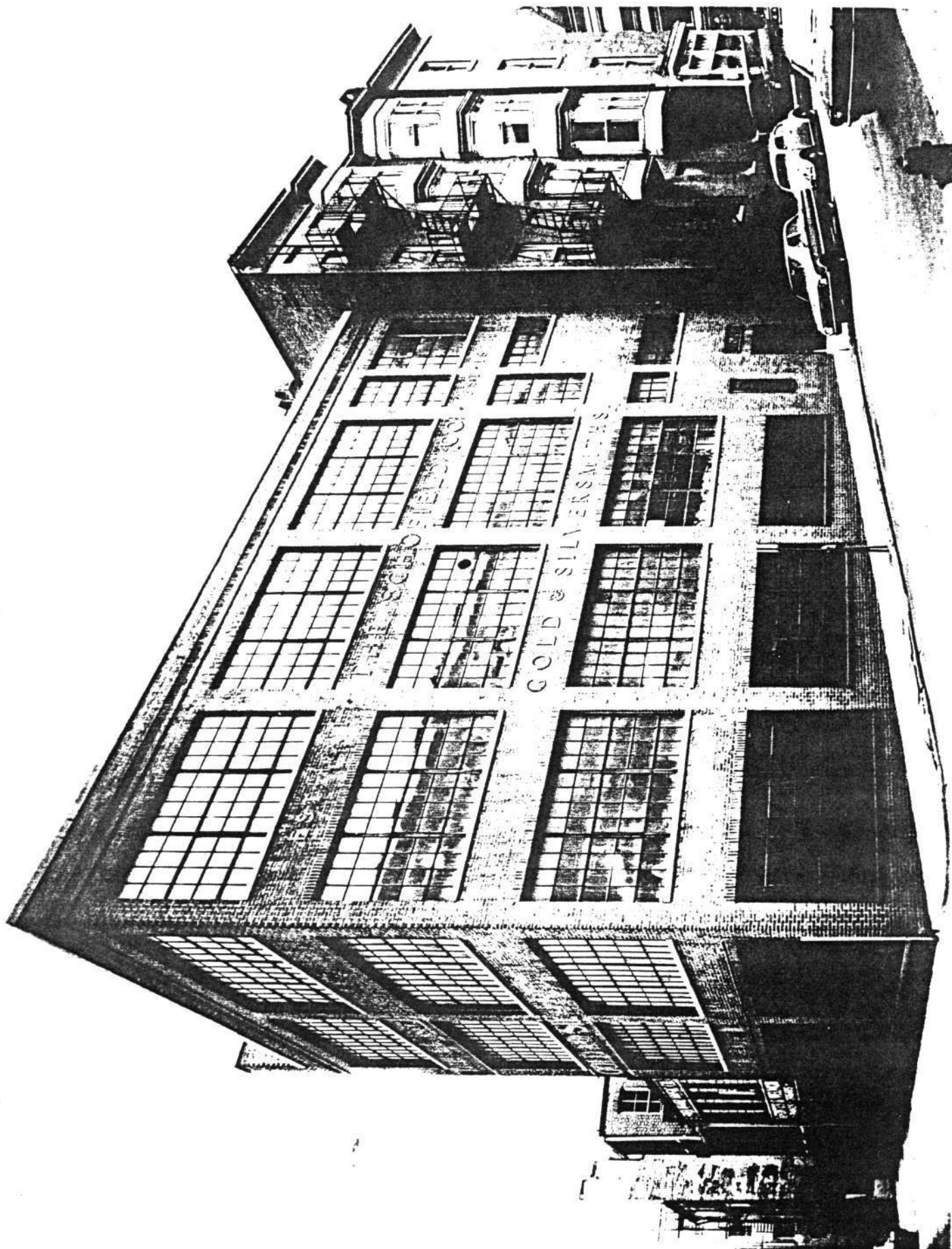
C&P Bldg. B-2229



Southeast corner, Charles and Pleasant Streets, ca. 1969 (Dem.) Site of C&P Bldg. B-2229
Original photo at C&P Hqs.



Charles Street, east side, ca. 1969 (Dem.) Site of C&P Bldg. B-2229
Original photo at C&P Hqs.



Schofield Silversmiths Factory Annex (Dem.) Pleasant Street, south side
Site of C&P Bldg. B-2229 Ca. 1969 Original photo at C&P Hqs.

Baltimore Metrocenter Survey
Cathedral Hill Area
C&P Telephone Bldg.
323 North Charles Street
B-2229



Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Co.
Bldg. B-2229

323 North Charles Street
Cathedral Hill - Metrocenter Survey
Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Janet Davis

Date: August 1984

Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust
West elevation

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

BK. 603
B 2229
MAG# 64222958/11

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

The Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

323 North Charles Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☒ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☒ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Records Office Room 601

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

Baltimore City Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 212

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

City of Baltimore Neighborhood Survey

DATE

1976

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL &
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

CITY, TOWN

Room 900

STATE

26 South Calvert St.

Baltimore, Md 21202

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1971, this, approximately ten story high building serves as offices and operations center for the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company. Visually impenetrable from the outside and not open to visitors, the interior of the building other than the ground floor lobby remains unknown except to those who are employed there, for reasons of internal security.

The Charles Street facade is five bays wide, and is defined by six massive, black granite sheathed piers which rise from the ground to a level above the roofline. The plate glass curtain wall which shields the ground floor lobby and offices is recessed behind the piers to provide a colonnade which rises in height as the aggregate concrete sidewalk slopes down toward Saratoga Street. The glass rests on a polished black granite base which levels the sloping site. Rectangular case concrete planters filled with ivy and evergreens are placed adjacent to each pier on the street side.

The second story bay from the left contains the entrance, which consists of a pair of revolving doors, which give access to a lobby also finished in the same granite. An electric wall sculpture by artist Lila Katzen adorns the lobby wall opposite the entrance.

At the second level the bays are filled with a one story high course of granite sheathing, from which springs the vertical glazing of black tinted one-way glass which rises unbroken, in slight recession, between each pair of piers. Individual lights are a half story high, three to a bay; their framing is undetectable from the exterior. The top two floors are sheathed in vertically corrugated black aluminum siding.

The Pleasant Street side of the building is a windowless, monolithic concoction consisting of a one story high black granite base which deepens to accomodate a drive-through garage opening to Lovegrove Street, as Pleasant Street slopes down from Charles. Rising from either edge of the facade are granite piers, matching those of the front facade. A large floating gray granite panel is centrally placed in the resulting U-Shaped frame, and is surrounded on all four sides by black corrugated aluminum siding. The back side of the building joins directly into the other, fourteen story high Telephone Building, which fronts on St. Paul Street.

The only ornamentation on the building is a small aluminum insignia, discreetly positioned at eye level on the northernmost Charles Street pier.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

B-2229

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1969

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

See 300 St. Paul Place.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION _____

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE _____

COUNTY _____

STATE _____

COUNTY _____

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Bill Pencek, Planning Assistant

ORGANIZATION

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL &
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

DATE

1976

STREET & NUMBER

Room 900

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

26 South Calvert St.
Baltimore, Md. 21202

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

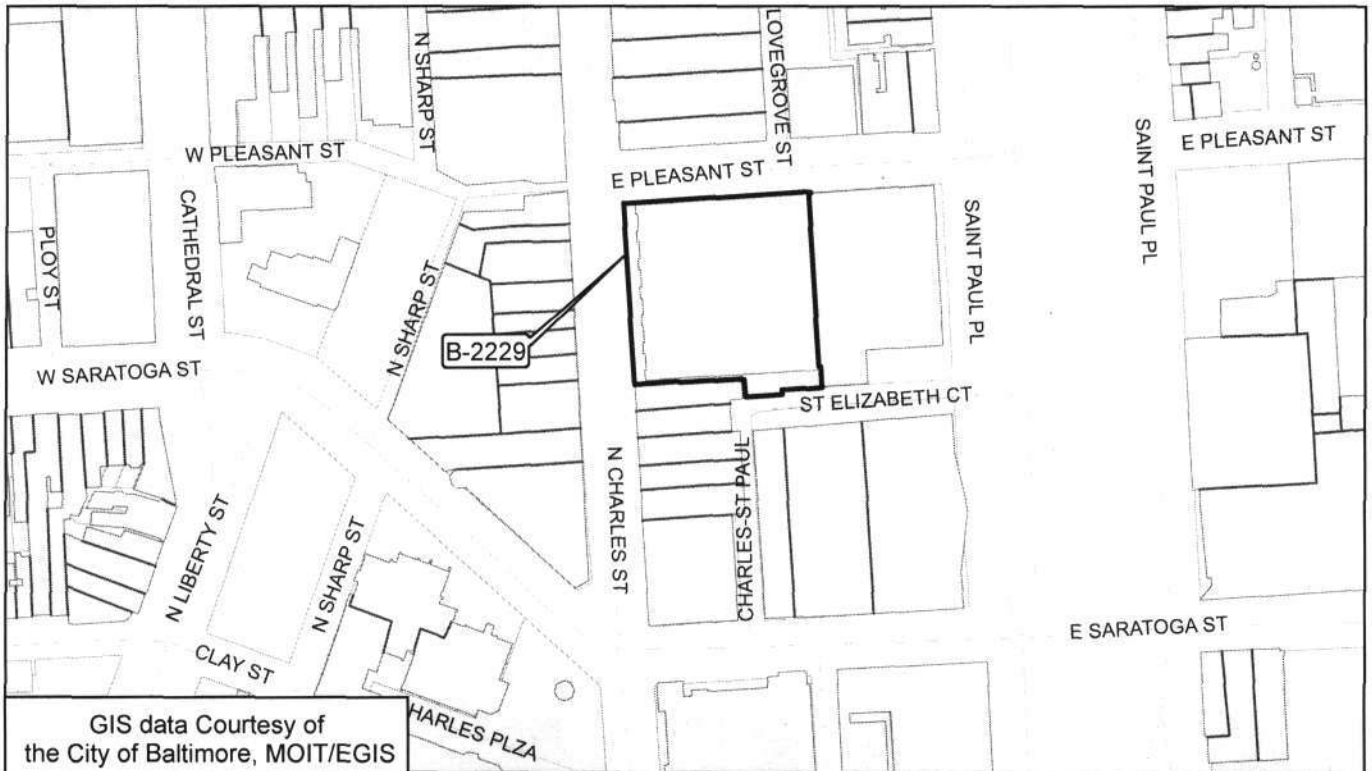
The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

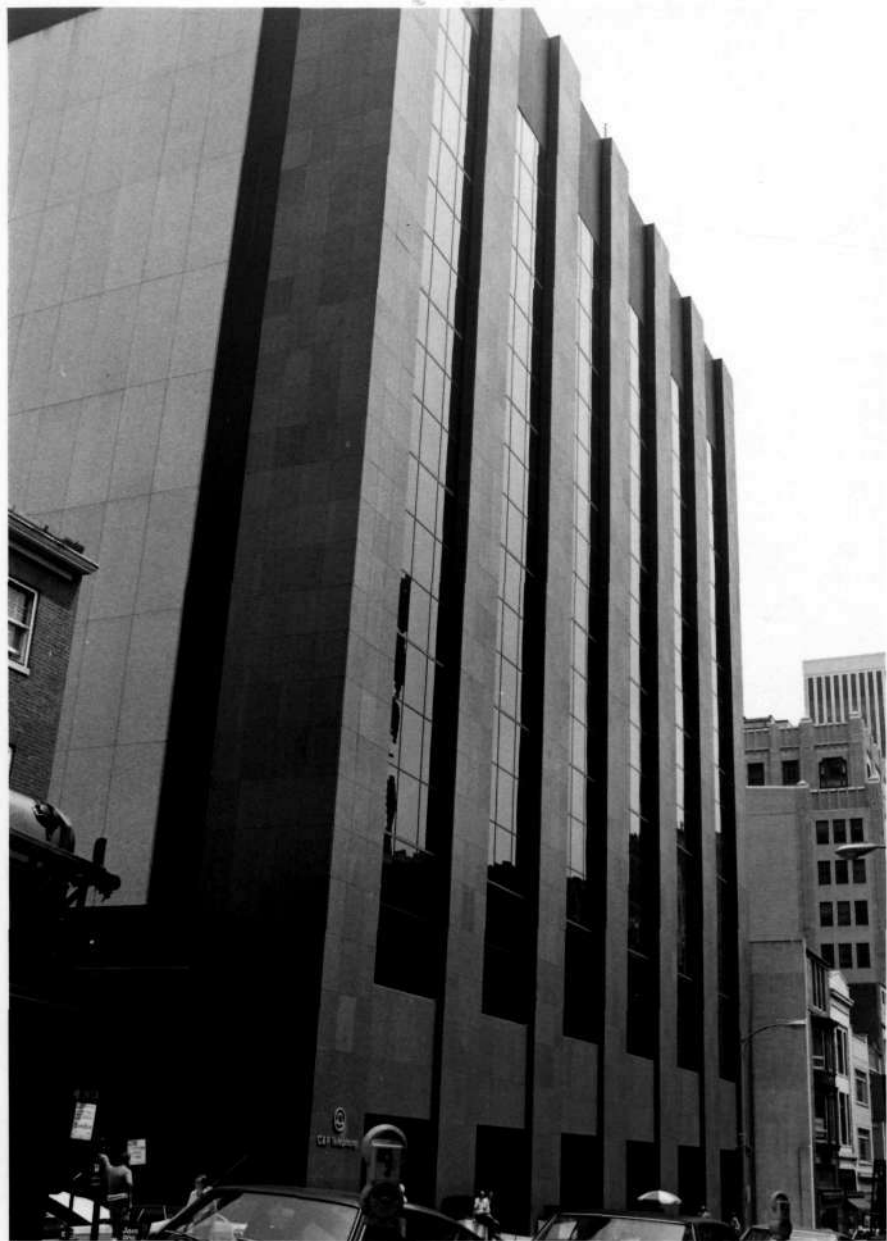
RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438

2015-14 THRU 23 CONS D PER APP. GIVE 100.8
2015-14-23, 24/21 CONS D PER APP. 50.1003

TRACED BY PLW
ENTERED BY JILW
CHECKED BY

B-2229
 Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company
 323 N. Charles Street
 Block 0603, Lot 015
 Baltimore City
 Baltimore East Quad.





B-2229

Q.P.

BLK 603

319-31 N. Charles